



A publication of Fairfax County, Virginia



**Office of the Fire Marshal
Fire Inspections Branch**
10700 Page Avenue
Fairfax, Virginia 22030
Telephone: 703-246-4849
Fax: 703-246-4872

CODE COMPLIANCE GUIDELINE

CARNIVALS, CIRCUSES, FAIRS, FESTIVALS & OUTDOOR PUBLIC ASSEMBLAGES

OVERVIEW

In Fairfax County and the towns of Clifton, Herndon, and Vienna, a variety of carnivals, circuses, fairs, festivals, and outdoor public assemblages are conducted throughout the year. Many of these events draw large crowds, stage shows, temporary tents, and amusement devices which can impede emergency access to buildings, structures, fire hydrants, and fire lanes. In addition, outdoor events such as these can adversely affect the response of public safety services such as emergency medical, fire, and police. Through the review and approval of a "Public Safety Plan," the Fire Marshal helps organizers and sponsors make certain an adequate level of public safety is provided at these types of events. In addition, the Fire Marshal issues Fire Prevention Code Permits (FPCP) for a variety of Fire Prevention Code regulated activities such as the use of liquefied petroleum gas, display of fireworks, and erection and occupancy of temporary tents; some of these permit requirements are referenced in this guideline.

This publication outlines Fire Prevention Code requirements for carnivals, circuses, fairs, festivals, and outdoor public assemblages held within Fairfax County and the towns of Clifton, Herndon, and Vienna. The objective of this publication is to provide essential information to organizers and sponsors that will ensure a safe and successful outdoor event.

Questions about the content of this publication should be directed to the Fire Inspections Branch at 703-246-4849 during normal business hours, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

OTHER LOCAL GOVERNMENTS & AGENCIES

When planning these types of outdoor events, particular attention should be given to notification and coordination with the following local and county government agencies:

- The towns of Clifton, Herndon, and Vienna Zoning Authorities & Police Departments
- Fairfax County Fire & Rescue Dept. 703-246-2126; Fairfax County Police Dept. 703-246-2253
- Department of Planning & Zoning (DPZ), Temporary Special Permit (TSP) - 703-324-1359
- Fairfax County Health Department, Food Service Permits and Inspections - 703-246-2444
- Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES), Permits - 703-324-1555
 - Electrical Permits - Electric Generators 6500+ watts & Electrical Subpanels
 - Amusement Device Permits - Inflatable & Mechanical Amusements

Important Notice about Zoning Requirements. The Fire Marshal will not issue a permit for an outdoor event without approval of the local zoning authority. In Fairfax County, a Temporary Special Permit (TSP) is often required for a carnival, circus, fair, festival, or outdoor public event. A TSP may be obtained from the Department of Planning & Zoning. Call 703-324-1359 for additional information. Clifton, Herndon, and Vienna have their own zoning ordinances which may require approval for outdoor events. Please contact these municipalities for detailed information.

APPLICATION, FEES, PLAN SUBMITTAL & APPROVAL

APPLICATION

An application for a public safety plan review for all carnivals, circuses, fairs, festivals, and outdoor public assemblages shall be made in writing by the person in charge of the event (Responsible Party). Applications may be obtained by contacting the Fire Inspections Branch at 703-246-4849 during normal business hours or from the Internet at the following link:

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fr/prevention/fmpublications/festivalappl.pdf>

FEES

Plan review fees are assessed at \$128 per hour, charged on the quarter-hour. Inspection fees are assessed at \$128 per hour, per inspector, charged on the quarter-hour. All plan review and inspection fees are invoiced to the person identified as the "Responsible Party" on the application. Payment is due upon receipt.

PLAN SUBMITTAL

At least 30 days prior to the event, the following documents shall be submitted to the Fire Marshal for review and approval:

- Application for public safety plan review
- Two (2) copies of a written emergency plan
- Two (2) copies of the site layout (diagram/event plan)

If the applicant would like an approved copy returned by mail, each submittal shall be accompanied with a self-addressed, postage-paid return envelope appropriately sized for the materials submitted. Otherwise, the approved applicant copy must be picked up at the County Fire Marshal's Office. The applicant will be notified by telephone when the plan is ready for pick-up. Please be certain to include a primary and secondary telephone number for notification. Submit all of the required documents above to the following address:

Fairfax County Fire & Rescue Department
Office of the Fire Marshal
10700 Page Avenue
Fairfax, VA 22030
ATTN: Outdoor Public Event Coordinator

APPROVAL

Final approval for all carnivals, fairs, festivals, and outdoor public assemblages is subject to the results of a pre-event site inspection which is scheduled after approval of the public safety plan, as well as random spot inspections during the event.

Notice: **Approved plans must be on-site at the time of the inspection by the Fire Marshal!**

Important Notice about Vendor Booths. Non-cooking booths and cooking booths shall have a flame-resistant treatment, NFPA 701 rating, and shall be submitted to the event sponsor to be included in the event plan.

- Recreational tents shall not be used as cooking booths.
- Cooking booths shall be separated by a minimum of 20 feet from non-cooking booths.
- Booth exit opening(s) shall be a minimum of 3 feet in width.
- No more than 9 consecutive cooking booths with a total area not to exceed 900 square feet shall be used unless a 12 foot fire break is placed between such sections.

PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

CARNIVALS, CIRCUSES, FAIRS, FESTIVALS, OUTDOOR PUBLIC ASSEMBLAGES

A one-time FPCP is required to establish a carnival, circus, fair, festival, or public assemblage.

Permit Type: F3CARN

Carnivals, Circuses, Fairs, Festivals, and Outdoor Public Assemblages (30-day permit)

The permit fee is \$125.

TEMPORARY TENTS

Temporary tents exceeding 900 square feet shall not be erected, maintained, occupied, or used for any purpose without first obtaining an FPCP from the Fire Marshal. Detailed procedures, requirements, and permit application for temporary tents may be obtained by contacting the Fire Inspections Branch at 703-246-4849 or from the Internet at the following link: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fr/prevention/fmpublications/tentguide.pdf>. All procedures and requirements outlined in the Temporary Tent code compliance guideline shall be followed.

Permit Type: F3TENT

Tents & Air-Supported Structures: Tent, 901+ square feet (120-day permit)

The permit fee is \$125.

Important Notice about Tent Inspections. Two inspections are required for a temporary tent. The inspections must be scheduled by the party, person, firm, or corporation responsible for erecting the tent. The first inspection is performed prior to the event to ensure code compliance involving a particular tent arrangement. The final inspection is performed the day of the event.

LIQUIFIED PETROLEUM GAS (LPG), HANDLING, STORAGE & USE

A one-time FPCP is required when LPG is handled, stored, or used in any amount.

Permit Type: F3LP6

Portable LP-Gas Cylinders - Per Event (**Cylinders/Tanks 1 to 40 lbs**)

The permit fee is \$65. (*Example: Food Vendors*)

Permit Type: F3LP5

Stationary LP-Gas Tank - Temporary Installation (**Cylinder/Tank Larger than 40 lbs**)

The permit fee is \$125. (*Example: Circus Tent Heating*)

Important Notice about Portable LP-Gas Cylinders. Portable LPG cylinders shall be recertified at a minimum of every 12 years and date-stamped on their protective collars or shall be in compliance with NFPA 58, *Liquefied Petroleum Gas Code* (2001 Edition).

OPEN FLAME & CANDLES

A one-time FPCP is required for the use of open flame in connection with a public meeting or gathering inside a building, space, or structure including temporary tents.

Permit Type: F3FLM2

Open Flame & Candles: Public Meeting/Gatherings (Each Event)

The permit fee is \$65.

SPECIAL AMUSEMENT BUILDINGS

A one-time FPCP is required to operate any special amusement building or occupancy.

Permit Type: F3AMST

Special Amusement Buildings & Occupancies

The permit fee is \$125.

FIREWORKS & PYROTECHNICS

A one-time FPCP is required for the display of fireworks and/or pyrotechnics.

Permit Type: F3FW3

Outdoor Fireworks Display, Aerial/Proximate Audience (1 Day Permit)

The permit fee is \$400.

Permit Type: F3FW4

Indoor Pyrotechnic Display & Special Effects (1 Day Permit)

The permit fee is \$400.

Detailed information about the display, handling, sale, storage, and use of fireworks and pyrotechnics in Fairfax County and the towns of Clifton, Herndon, and Vienna, can be obtained by contacting the Fire Inspections Branch at 703-246-4849 during normal business hours or from the Internet at the following link:

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fr/prevention/fmfireworks.htm>

Notice: In addition to submitting a Public Safety Plan Review application for carnivals, fairs, festivals, and outdoor public assemblages, a separate FPCP application is required for the above listed permit requirements. A complete list of FPCP requirements and an FPCP application is available on the Internet at the following link:

http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fr/prevention/fpcp_codelist.pdf

SITE LAYOUT DIAGRAM & WRITTEN EMERGENCY PLAN

SITE LAYOUT

The site layout plan shall be in the form of a legible diagram and shall include:

1. Name of event, date, and time of operation shown on each page of the plan.
2. Contact information of responsible onsite party.
3. Overall site map.
4. List of booth or site numbers (name of occupant if possible).
5. Approved fire lanes noted on plan.
6. All structures within the event site.
7. All fire hydrants and fire department connections (standpipe, sprinkler and yard hydrants).
8. Street widths shall be noted on drawing.
9. Location of all tents and air supported structure shall include dimensions and distance from other tents and structures.
10. Location of all cooking, retail, and display booths and amusements.
11. Location of all propane use including cooking and heating.
12. Location of all portable generators.
13. Location of outdoor assembly areas for concert or lectures including:
 - Seating configuration.
 - VIP seating.
 - Observation decks or towers.
 - Detail measurements of fenced areas and egress gates.
 - List of dates and times of peak events.
14. Fire department access routes.
15. Fireworks display site and fallout area.
16. The approximate completion time for set-up on the day of the event.

WRITTEN PLAN

The written emergency plan shall include:

1. The date and time of the event.
2. The name and address of the event facility.
3. Complete contact information for the event sponsor, coordinator, and all alternate contacts to include cell phone numbers and e-mail addresses.
4. The approximate number of attendees and staff.
5. Means of communication available to summon help if needed.
6. Procedure for reporting a fire or other emergency.
7. Evacuation procedures in the event of an emergency (fire, weather, bomb threat, or violence).
8. A plan to immediately stop any music, all audio-visual special effects in the event of emergency.
9. Primary and secondary evacuation routes and assembly locations.
10. In case of emergency, any staff member can call 911.
11. Review address and name of the event.
12. Emergency procedures and evacuation plans shall be reviewed and discussed with all event staff.
13. In the event of an emergency, staff will be able to give a location within the event.

The following are selected references from the Fire Prevention Code that are directly related to fire and life safety at carnivals, fairs, festivals, and outdoor public assemblages. Some are included because of areas of compliance problems in the past. If you have any questions about the Fire Prevention Code, please contact the Inspections Branch at 703-246-4849 during normal business hours.

- **403.2 Public safety plan.** In other than Group A or E occupancies, where the fire code official determines that an indoor or outdoor gathering of persons has an adverse impact on public safety through diminished access to buildings, structures, fire hydrants, and fire apparatus access roads or where such gatherings adversely affect public safety services of any kind, the fire code official shall have the authority to order the development of, or prescribe a plan for, the provision of an approved level of public safety.
- **503.1.1 Fire lanes.** The fire official shall designate fire lanes on public streets and on private property where necessary for the purpose of preventing parking in front of or adjacent to fire hydrants and fire department connections and to ensure access to buildings and structures for firefighting and rescue apparatus. Fire lanes shall have a minimum width of 18 feet (5486mm).
- **503.7 Carnivals and circus access.** It shall be the responsibility of the owner, operator or other person responsible for the establishment, erection or operation of any carnival or circus to establish, erect and operate such carnival or circus so that there is provided and maintained an access lane, at least 18 feet in width and capable of supporting fire and rescue apparatus in all weather conditions and so arranged as to afford access to within 50 feet of all booths, tents, rides and other equipment, buildings, and structures used as part of or in conjunction with the carnival or circus.
- **508.5.5 Clear space around hydrants and connections.** No person shall plant or erect any obstruction within 4' of a fire hydrant or 10' of a fire department connection.

TENTS AND AIR SUPPORTED STRUCTURES

- **108.5.12 Membrane structures, air supported structures, and tents.** A construction permit is required to erect all membrane structures or any tent or air supported structure that covers an area greater than 900 square feet (84 m), including within that area all connecting areas or spaces with a common means of egress or entrance, provided such tents or structures have an occupant load of greater than 50 persons. Tents used exclusively for recreational camping shall not be required to obtain a construction permit.
- **2403.9 Anchorage required.** Tents or membrane structures and their appurtenances shall be adequately roped, braced and anchored to withstand the elements of weather and prevent against collapsing. Documentation of structural stability shall be furnished to the fire code official on request.
- **2403.12.3 Exit openings from tents.** Exit openings from tents shall remain open unless covered by a flame-resistant curtain. The curtain shall comply with the following requirements:
 1. Curtains shall be free sliding on a metal support. The support shall be a minimum of 80 inches (2032 mm) above the floor level at the exit. The curtains shall be so arranged that, when open, no part of the curtain obstructs the exit.
 2. Curtains shall be of a color, or colors, that contrast with the color of the tent.
- **2403.12.6 Exit signs.** Exits shall be clearly marked. Exit signs shall be installed at required exit doorways and where otherwise necessary to indicate clearly the direction of egress when the exit serves an occupant load of 50 or more.
- **2403.12.7 Means of egress illumination.** Means of egress shall be illuminated with light having an intensity of not less than 1 foot-candle (11 lux) at floor level while the structure is occupied. Fixtures required for means of egress illumination shall be supplied from a separate circuit or source of power.
- **Flame propagation performance treatment.** Before a permit is granted, the owner or agent shall file with the fire code official a certificate executed by an approved testing laboratory certifying that the tents; canopies and membrane structures and their appurtenances; sidewalls, drops and tarpaulins; floor coverings, bunting and combustible decorative materials and effects, including sawdust when used on floors or passageways, shall be composed of material meeting the flame propagation performance criteria of NFPA 701 or shall be treated with a flame retardant in an approved manner and meet the flame propagation performance criteria of NFPA 701, and that such flame propagation performance criteria are effective for the period specified by the permit.
- **2404.3 Labels.** Membrane structures or tents shall have a permanently affixed label bearing the identification of size and fabric or material type.
- **2404.4 Certification.** An affidavit or affirmation shall be submitted to the fire code official and a copy retained on the premises on which the tent or air-supported structure is located. The affidavit shall attest to the following information relative to the flame propagation performance criteria of the fabric:

1. Names and address of the owners of the tent or air-supported structure.
 2. Date the fabric was last treated with flame-retardant solution.
 3. Trade name or kind of chemical used in treatment.
 4. Name of person or firm treating the material.
 5. Name of testing agency and test standard by which the fabric was tested.
- **2404.6 Smoking.** Smoking shall not be permitted in tents or membrane structures. Approved "No Smoking" signs shall be conspicuously posted in accordance with Section 310.
 - **2404.11 Clearance.** There shall be a minimum clearance of 3 feet between the fabric envelope and all contents within the tent.
 - **2404.12 Portable fire extinguishers.** Portable fire extinguishers shall be provided as required by Section 906.
 - **2404.17.2 Flammable and combustible liquids storage.** Flammable and combustible liquids shall be stored outside in an approved manner not less than 50 feet (15 240 mm) from tents or membrane structures. Storage shall be in accordance with Chapter 34.
 - **2404.19 Separation of generators.** Generators and other internal combustion power sources shall be separated from tents or membrane structures by a minimum of 20 feet (6096mm) and shall be isolated from contact with the public by fencing, enclosure or other approved means. (One 2A:20B:C Portable fire extinguisher shall be located near the generator).

COOKING DEVICES

- **308.2.1 Throwing or placing sources of ignition.** No person shall throw or place, or cause to be thrown or placed, a lighted match, cigar, cigarette, matches, or other flaming or glowing substance or object on any surface or article where it can cause an unwanted fire.
- **603.7 Discontinuing operation of unsafe heating appliances.** The fire code official is authorized to order that measures be taken to prevent the operation of any existing stove, oven, furnace, incinerator, boiler or any other heat-producing device or appliance found to be defective or in violation of code requirements for existing appliances after giving notice to this effect to any person, owner, firm or agent or operator in charge of the same. The fire code official is authorized to take measures to prevent the operation of any device or appliance without notice when inspection shows the existence of an immediate fire hazard or when imperiling human life. The defective device shall remain withdrawn from service until all necessary repairs or alterations have been made.
- **2404.15.4 Operations.** Operations such as warming of foods, cooking demonstrations and similar operations that use solid flammables, butane or other similar devices which do not pose an ignition hazard, shall be approved. (Chaffing dishes shall have the correct fuel canister that was designed for the unit and shall be on a non-combustible surface).
- **2404.15.5 Cooking tents.** Tents where cooking is performed shall be separated from other tents or membrane structures by a minimum of 20 feet (6096 mm).

- **2404.15.6 Outdoor cooking.** Outdoor cooking that produces sparks or grease-laden vapors shall not be performed within 20 feet (6096 mm) from a tent or membrane structure.
- **2404.16 LP-gas.** The storage, handling and use of LP-gas and LP-gas equipment shall be in accordance with this section.
 - **2404.16.1 General.** LP-gas equipment such as tanks, piping, hoses, fittings, valves, tubing and other related components shall be approved and in accordance with Chapter 38 and with the *International Fuel Gas Code*.
 - **2404.16.2 Location of containers.** LP-gas containers shall be located outside. Safety release valves shall be pointed away from the tent, canopy or membrane structure.
 - **2404.16.2.1 Containers 500 gallons or less.** Portable LP-gas containers with a capacity of 500 gallons (1893 L) or less shall have a minimum separation between the container and structure not less than 10 feet (3048 mm).
 - **2404.16.2.2 Containers more than 500 gallons.** Portable LP-gas containers with a capacity of more than 500 gallons (1893 L) shall have a minimum separation between the container and structures not less than 25 feet (7620 mm).
- **2404.17.1 Use.** Flammable-liquid-fueled equipment shall not be used in tents or membrane structures.
- **2404.17.2 Flammable and combustible liquid storage.** Flammable and combustible liquids shall be stored outside in an approved manner not less than 50 feet (15 240 mm) from tents or membrane structures. Storage shall be in accordance with Chapter 34.
- **2404.17.3 Refueling.** Refueling shall be performed in an approved location not less than 20 feet (6096 mm) from tents, canopies or membrane structures.
- **3003.5.3 Securing compressed gas containers, cylinders and tanks.** Compressed gas containers, cylinders and tanks shall be secured to prevent falling caused by contact, vibration or seismic activity. Securing of compressed gas containers, cylinders and tanks shall be by one of the following methods:
 1. Securing containers, cylinders and tanks to a fixed object with one or more restraints.
 2. Securing containers, cylinders and tanks on a cart or other mobile device designed for the movement of compressed gas containers, cylinders or tanks.
 3. Testing of compressed gas containers, cylinders and tanks at container filling or servicing facilities or in seller's warehouses not accessible to the public. Nesting shall be allowed provided the nested containers, cylinders or tanks, if dislodged, do not obstruct the required means of egress.
 4. Securing of compressed gas containers, cylinders and tanks to or within a rack, framework, cabinet or similar assembly designed for such use.

Fairfax County is committed to a policy of non-discrimination in all county programs, services, and activities. Upon request, the Office of the Fire Marshal can provide documents and publications in alternative formats and in different languages. Please call 703-246-4753 (TTY: 711 or 1-800-828-1120) or write us at the following address: Office of the Fire Marshal, 10700 Page Avenue, Fairfax, VA 22030. Allow at least seven to ten working days for preparation of material.